

**WABASH RIVER HERITAGE CORRIDOR COMMISSION**  
**Meeting Minutes - November 10, 2004**  
**Indiana Government Center South, Conference Center, Room B**  
**Indianapolis, Indiana**

**Voting members present:**

Cass County-Mercedes Brugh  
DNR-Steve Morris  
Huntington County-Mike Mettler  
Miami County-Ken Einselen  
Parke County-John Isaacs  
Sullivan County-John Gettinger  
Tippecanoe County-Norman (Lucky)  
Neiburger  
Vermillion County-Leroy Kelsheimer  
Vigo County-Keith Ruble  
Warren County-Louise Jewell  
Wells County-Keith Huffman

**Voting members absent w/o proxy:**

Allen County  
Carroll County  
Fountain County  
Gibson County  
Jay County  
Knox County  
Posey County

**Proxies:**

Adams County-John Gettinger  
Wabash County-John Gettinger

**Non-voting members present:**

Martha Clark-Mettler-IDEM

**Non-voting members not present:**

INDOT  
DNR-DHPA  
Dept. of Commerce-Tourism

**Commission and DNR staff present:**

Ron James -WRHCC Exec. Director  
Cynthia Webb-DNR Outdoor Recreation  
Dale Brier-DNR Outdoor Recreation

**Others present:**

Clayton Taylor-WFYI  
Gary Harrison-WFYI  
John Shuey-Nature Conservancy  
Don Jewell  
Timothy Kroeker-IDEM

**CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS**

John Gettinger called the meeting to order at 1:05 pm. All attendees introduced themselves.

**REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 8, 2004 MEETING MINUTES**

John Isaacs made a motion to approve the minutes, and Mercedes Brugh seconded the motion. Minutes were approved as written.

**SPEAKERS**

John Gettinger introduced Clayton Taylor from WFYI. Mr. Taylor spoke about the Wabash River Heritage Corridor video. He explained that Cinergy (Hoosier Energy) has awarded a grant towards the video. Mr. Taylor informed the commission that filming has begun (Feast of the Hunter's Moon, Lafayette and Vincennes) and that they need notice of all visual events. Mr. Taylor introduced Gary Harrison who will be in charge of photography. Commission members were invited to participate in filming segments immediately after the commission meeting. Keith Huffman asked how much was budgeted for the video. Mr. Taylor set the amount as \$45,000.

## **SPEAKERS (continued)**

John Shuey, Director of Conservation Science, Indiana Chapter of The Nature Conservancy was the commission's next speaker. Mr. Shuey handed out copies of The Nature Conservancy magazine and the newsletter of the Indiana Chapter. He also handed out a map of Indiana's Ecoregional Portfolio Sites. Mr. Shuey spoke of the Indiana projects upon which The Nature Conservancy has been working. The Nature Conservancy was the recipient of a bequest of \$41 million, designated specifically for Indiana. The Conservancy would like to form a partnership with Hanover College who has received \$11 million in funding for a Rivers Institute.

Mercedes Brugh asked Mr. Shuey if he would assist the Commission in writing a letter to Hanover College to encourage a Wabash River Project partnership between The Nature Conservancy and the Rivers Institute. Lucky Neiburger suggested inviting the yet to be appointed Executive Director of the Rivers Institute to speak at a future Commission meeting.

At the end of John Shuey's presentation, John Gettinger asked for additions to the agenda. Mercedes Brugh asked to have discussion about writing a letter to Hanover College about the Wabash River Project. It will be discussed under New Business.

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

John Gettinger reported being kept very busy with the 8<sup>th</sup> graders trip on the Wabash River. In Sullivan County they have been able to raise \$6,000 and over 500 hours of volunteer manpower. Senator Waterman was there and is very supportive of what they are doing. John announced the opening of Fairbanks Landing on November 13<sup>th</sup>. Indiana Michigan Power has leased to the State of Indiana, 8,000 acres, with six miles being along the Wabash River. John also reported that he is chairman of the Turtlecreek Watershed Group. The group is being awarded the Hoosier Chapter Soil & Water Conservation Society Education and Information Award on November 18<sup>th</sup>. John mentioned he had spoken to all of the legislators on his list, except for two. One, in Indianapolis, and one, in New Albany, were to be contacted the following week (Nov. 15-19).

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

The Executive Director's report was attached to the back of the meeting agenda. Ron James also reported he and Susan Benner met to review WRHCC information that Ron will need in his role as Executive Director. Ron attended the legislative committee meeting and helped mail out the legislative information packets. Ron is preparing a presentation for a Nov. 13, 2004, Hoosier Canoe Club meeting.

At this time Louise Jewell thought the Commission should do something for Susan Benner, our recently resigned executive director. Keith Huffman thought a nice plaque should be made to give to Susan. Keith said he would get the plaque done with help from Ron James and that it would not cost the Commission anything. The Commission was very appreciative.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Finance**

Steve Morris passed out the financial report to commission members. Steve pointed out the expenditures from Sept. 8-Nov. 10 were \$2,067.81, which makes the total expenditures 2004-2005 at \$3,020.44. Steve explained that the last column shows the expenditures as compared to

**Finance (continued)**

the budget. The Commission is over budget on the telephone due to the problems with the cell phone package, which led to its recent upgrade to allow for more minutes. The new package is \$70.00/month, while the previous package was \$50.00/month. With the old package, by going over on minutes, the Commission was being billed \$200 and \$300. The \$70 package will be more monthly but will likely cover used minutes and avoid spikes in the bill. Steve also pointed out that we appear to be going over budget on travel due to a lot of committee meetings and some people having to drive long distances. Keith Huffman made a motion to accept the finance report, Mercedes and Lucky, at the same time, seconded the motion. Motion passed.

**Personnel**

John Gettinger considered the appointment of a committee to meet with Ron James, the executive director, every other meeting and discuss how he is getting along in job. Discussion was held. It was agreed to allow the executive committee to meet with Ron. The executive committee consists of the president, vice-president, and secretary of the Commission.

Steve Morris informed the Commission that the contract for the executive director has made it through the signature process. It is now going through another process to encumber the funds. This involves putting in a requisition that results in a purchase order. Once the funds are encumbered, then any funds remaining to be paid on the contract after June 30<sup>th</sup>, will carry over into the next fiscal year instead of reverting back to the general fund.

**Legislative**

Mercedes Brugh reported that the committee decided to assign members to contact legislators before the new legislative session convened November 17<sup>th</sup>. Mercedes put together packets, sent out September 29<sup>th</sup>, for assigned members of the Commission.

Mercedes was assigned Representative Richard McClain and Senator Tom Weatherwax. Mercedes spoke to Rep. McClain on October 25. Mr. McClain's priorities are water quality and a clean river – he likes buffer strips as a tool. He believes our mission is being fulfilled but found improvement could be had with more publicity and letters to newspapers. The Commission is important but not as important as schools. He supports both the \$200K line item and the promise of \$4 million for corridor fund projects. Representative McClain gave Mercedes his aide's name and number; Mercedes sent her the information she was supposed to send to her.

Ms. Brugh met with Senator Tom Weatherwax on November 9<sup>th</sup>. Sen. Weatherwax's goal for the corridor will be having each legislator look at their district and decide what they can do for their district. Senator Weatherwax's own goal is promoting the River and trails in Logansport. When asked if the Commission was filling its mission, he said yes, and that "money disbursement was the Commission's mission." Senator Weatherwax was impressed with the Corridor Management Plan (CMP), especially the list of funded projects in the back. Sen. Weatherwax supports the \$200,000 for the Commission budget and the \$4 million for corridor fund. He stressed the importance of talking to Senators Vi Simpson and John Waterman. Sen. Weatherwax wants a report of other legislators' comments. He said that the Ways & Means committee and the Finance committee members are very important to reach.

## **Legislative (continued)**

Ron James reported that he was resigning as commissioner for Allen County as that role might conflict with his role as Executive Director of the Commission. Before resigning, Ron was given six Allen County legislators to contact. Mr. James had called them all and met with Rep. Kruse, at a trails meeting. Representative Kruse took a “wait and see” position with the budget. Rep. Kruse did say he would look at the Commission materials. Ron had arranged a meeting with Representative Moses for November 11<sup>th</sup>, to be handled by Paul McAfee. Senators Wyss and Long, and Reps. GiaQuinta and Borrer, have not, as yet, returned the calls.

Mike Mettler met with Representative Leonard. Rep. Leonard was not familiar with the Commission. Mike talked with Mr. Leonard for about an hour and a half. Representative Leonard liked the idea of water quality. Representative Leonard is a friend of Representative Jeff Espich. Mike has not met with Senator Dillon yet, but has previous commitments from him.

Keith Huffman reported that on November 13<sup>th</sup>, at the Wells Co. Chamber Building, there was to be a meeting with Representative Ripley, Representative Espich, and Senator Ford. Also, the library director will give out Corridor Management Plans for each public library in the county.

John Isaacs contacted Representative Tim Brown before the election. Representative Brown could not see him then. John tried again after the election and left an answer machine message, but has not heard anything yet. After the elections, John called Representative Thomas. His wife said she would have him call. John has not heard back from them. John inquired if he should continue his efforts to contact them. Mercedes Brugh suggested sending a letter.

Ken Einselen was to speak to Representative Friend. Representative Friend said he would meet but has not as yet. Ken was in Marion and tried to meet with Representative Turner at his business. Ken was told to meet with Representative Turner after the election.

John Gettinger spoke to Senator Waterman, who said he would support the WRHCC in all their endeavors. John contacted Senator Vi Simpson and she will meet with him after the elections. John has not yet contacted Representative Cochran or Representative Crawford. Bruce Borders is the new Representative for District 45. John feels Rep. Borders will be supportive.

Lucky Neiburger talked to Representative Sheila Klinker. Representative Klinker promised to make sure the \$200,000 is in the budget for commission operating expenses. Lucky said he yet needs to call Representative Joe Micon and Senator Ron Alting.

Keith Ruble talked to Senator Tim Skinner and Representative Clyde Kersey; they were both very supportive of what the WRHCC is doing. Keith still has to contact Vern Tinch. Keith also complimented Mercedes on the excellent job she did on the packet.

Louise Jewell has not yet contacted either Representative Dale Grubb or Senator Joe Harrison. Louise did inform Lucky that she knew Representative Joe Micon very well.

Ron James said he would attempt to get reports from the members not present today.

### **Water Trail**

Mike Mettler reported the committee last met October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2004. Mike said they were making progress on the signs. It was proposed to use maps of six sections of the river. Bernie Dahl offered money from The Banks of the Wabash to pay his students to draw the maps for print and website. Mike talked about the various placements for the signs. His county highway superintendent said to “give them the signs (for a bridge) and they would put them up.” There was a discussion about the type and expense of the maps. Dale Brier suggested partnerships or sponsorships to help with the expense of the maps. Keith Ruble suggested a Transportation Enhancement grant. Mercedes mentioned that the Transp. Enhanc. applications are due at the end of January. It was decided to work on the maps and the website before ordering the signs.

### **Wabash Video**

Mercedes informed the Commission the Wabash Video Committee met with WFYI earlier today. WFYI is making a short 2-4 minute “tool” DVD, for helping raise money for the video. WFYI will make a presentation at the next meeting on how members of the Commission can help find funding for the video. WFYI is doing time-sensitive video taping now.

### **Education**

John Gettinger said he was chair of the Education Committee. John passed out information about “Discover the River”. “Discover the River” is a 4-H project devised to help 4-Hrs learn about the Wabash River. The education committee took part in the organization of it. John and his group also took about 20 children from Sullivan County on a rafting trip on the Wabash River.

### **Newsletter**

Ron James reported receiving two articles for the electronic newsletter, but that computer problems prevented its publication. The annual printed newsletter was discussed. Mercedes Brugh made a motion to mail out a printed newsletter, Ken Einselen seconded, motion passed.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

#### **501(c)(3) Status**

John Gettinger reported that Banks of the Wabash was expanding to cover the entire 19 county Wabash River corridor. With Banks of the Wabash expanding its service area, there would be no need to establish another 501(c)(3) organization to serve the corridor. The Banks expansion was planned on a county chapter basis. Keith Ruble suggested that each county should also encourage a dedicated Wabash River Fund within their county community foundations.

#### **WRHC Brochure Reprint**

Ron James reported there is no money as yet for a reprint of the WRHC brochures. Freshening the brochure could cost about \$800 in design costs. Ron suggested that each commissioner should look over the brochure and be ready to report any changes at the January meeting.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Locations For 2005 Meetings**

January and March meetings of 2005 are scheduled for Indianapolis. The May meeting will be held in Logansport, Bluffton in July and Lafayette in September (unless a southern county would be willing to host the Commission) and November in Indianapolis. Mercedes Brugh suggested any new director of DNR be a speaker at one of the Commission meetings. He or she will be sought for the March meeting.

### **Nominating Committee**

John Gettinger appointed Louise Jewell, Mike Mettler and Ken Einselen to a nominating committee for president and vice-president.

### **Letters Sent & Received**

See attached.

Steve Morris received a letter from Vermillion County Commissioners appointing Leroy Kelsheimer as their new representative to the Wabash River Heritage Corridor Commission.

Ron James commented on the newsletters received at the Commission office. The Commission suggested bringing the newsletters to the meeting for members' perusal and then disposing.

### **Other Items**

Mercedes Brugh made a motion for John Gettinger to write a letter to Hanover College in favor of their using the Wabash River in a river project. Lucky Neiburger seconded the motion. Motion passed. John Gettinger and Ron James are planning to go to Hanover College and talk to them about the project and hand them the Commission's Corridor Management Plan.

Ron James asked about purchasing a new laptop computer, projector and fax service at a cost under the \$3500 budgeted for office equipment. Keith Huffman made a motion to approve up to \$3000 for new computer equipment and Leroy Kelsheimer seconded the motion. Motion passed.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Banks of the Wabash meeting in Covington on November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2004.

## **GENERAL DISCUSSION**

### **Final Comments by Commission Members**

Martha Mettler introduced Timothy Kroeker. Timothy is Watershed Specialist for IDEM. He is working in the northeast corner of the state. Timothy will be substituting for Martha when she is unable to attend the Commission meetings.

Mercedes Brugh complimented Dale Brier for the maps he supplied for the legislative packages.

John Isaacs made a motion to adjourn. Ken Einselen seconded. Meeting adjourned.

**NEXT MEETING is January 12, 2005, Indianapolis-Indiana Government Center South, Conference Center Rooms 4 & 5.**